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Greetings Members of the Board:

When I read about the forum in the Wichita EAGLE, I anticipated an opportunity to talk to a health industry person on a one-to-one basis. It was a surprise to find many of the top representatives in the Kansas healthcare industry.

Anyway, as I mentioned, I am a generally healthy male senior citizen turning 70 in October. I continue to work daily in several enterprises. I rarely go to a doctor and so far haven't taken any prescription medicines in my life. However, my doctor is suggesting I begin taking blood pressure medicine due to my age.

So, back in May, when I received various telemarketing calls about Medicare's new "PART D, PRESCRIPTION DRUG PROGRAM," I generally listened to learn how the program works.

A telemarketer from Phoenix, who didn't identify his actual telemarketing company, said he represented several companies offering the PART D program. He said he represented the health insurance company with which I have my Medicare supplemental insurance plan. This turned out to be a fib -- he was really representing ANTHEM INSURANCE COMPANY, a distant cousin of my supplemental insurance company.

He said if I would give him my mailing address, etc. he would send me a package of information -- which I still haven't received -- and said to look it over to see if I wanted it. But, he apparently did sign me up for the program and they began sending me bills and paper work almost immediately.

I checked around with people who had examined the program and the word on the street was to wait for six months to let the wrinkles shake out of the program.

To make sure I wasn't actually enrolled, I immediately began calling various telephone numbers at Medicare and "Blue Medicare RX," apparently a subsidiary of ANTHEM in Kentucky. I talked to several people who wouldn't identify themselves nor which city they were located in. All passed the buck to others.

I then wrote three letters to "Blue Medicare RX," one to a St. Louis address and two special delivery, return receipt requested letters to a Louisville, Kentucky address. To this date, I have never received a personalized reply which referenced my letters. The replies were form letters, one of which warned me that there was a "penalty" for signing up later, an attempt to intimidate me as a senior citizen.

To date, I don't know if I am in or out of their program. Their letters have stopped coming.

Actually, I might eventually sign up for a PART D insurance program once I learn what benefits it offers, if any.

Supplemental Note: Using third-party telemarketers to sell the program like selling telephone services seems unprofessional. Giving uninformed, inaccurate information to senior citizens is not good. I think the program should be streamlined so that each company offers the same alternatives but priced as they wish so the various programs can be evaluated more easily. This would follow the model of Medicare's supplemental insurance programs. I suspect the use of the "doughnut" pay schedule is confusing to most people and I still haven't analyzed the benefits.